

# The Bloomfield Record.

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## FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

Easter Week in Florence.

BY JESSE BENEDICT CARTER.

The arrival of her Majesty, Queen Victoria, in Florence about ten days ago has been the exciting event of the past week. The donkey and the bath chair with the Indian servants got here first and her Majesty followed two or three days later. She is living in the Villa Fabbricotti just a little outside the town toward Fiesole. I can just see the tower roof from the window.

She drives out every day. On the box of her coach is seated a gigantic Highlander in costume and sitting beside her Majesty is usually to be found the Princess Beatrice. Far more imposing than the Queen herself is the chief of her Indian retinue, a gorgeous looking individual who always drives in an open carriage.

One afternoon I went to the Casino or Park in the south-eastern part of the city where I strolled along and watched the whirling stream of fashionable carriages and pedestrians. The Italians dress much more like the Americans than the Germans do, and altogether it was an elegant looking crowd.

Florence is like a big railway centre just now. It is overflowing with strangers of all nationalities. There is the usual crowd of English and Americans who are dressed in proper tourist trim and who stroll about with that air of possessing a first mortgage on the universe which is so characteristic of the Saxon race. Then there is a big medical Congress at present in Rome and that has drawn to Italy several hundreds of German physicians with their wives. The German on his travels in foreign countries is such a curious creature, just like a child strayed out of the nursery. He strolls the streets arm in arm with his wife and tries to look unconcerned but it is all a failure. He is a fish out of water and every Italian realizes it.

It is fun to go down to the piazza della Signoria and stand in front of the porch of the Lances and watch the groups, drawing inspiration from Beedeker surrounded by the peddlers of articles ranging all the way from matches through newspapers and flowers to guide books and lottery tickets. They look so travel worn (the travelers I mean, but the peddlers do too for that matter). The piazza is full of doves and it is a pretty sight to see the little English children feeding them with the corn which the boot-blacks sell for the purpose.

Facing on this piazza is the Palazzo Vecchio and the gallery of the Uffizi. This gallery is connected by a covered archway with the Pitti Palace so that the two form one vast picture gallery.

There is always the type of the "money rich" and the "culture poor" American who hires guides on all provocation and where attention is divided between trying to appreciate the crumb which his guide is throwing out for his mortification and in making his own practical comments on art, which, if they are "shocking," at times have at least the virtue of ingenuousness. Brides and grooms though not as plentiful as at Venice are thick enough to prove that marriage is not popularly considered a "rite."

The "day before" of "Holy Week," the day before the "day of the week," is the custom of every good Catholic to visit seven sepulchres (as the imitation of Christ's sepulchre in the various churches is called). Though far from being a "good Catholic" or a "bad one" either for that matter I determined to follow the custom and see the people and was well repaid. It was a series of pictures which have photographed themselves deep in my mind. Every church had something distinct and characteristic about it. I went to Santa Croce, where Michael Angelo lies buried, then to the Annunziata, where the altar was ablaze with candles, and so on till I came finally into the Cathedral (Duomo) at six o'clock. I shall never forget the impression that seized me as I walked in out of the hot sun, out of all the hubbub of the Piazza where fruit sellers were shouting and omnibuses were thundering by, and out of the world into the cool darkness of the cathedral. The light effect was most wonderful. All the places where I stood was in deep shadow but down through the stained glass windows of the dome came the golden beams of the setting sun. The light played above the altar and gilded the top of

the hanging crucifix and then below came the darkness till it was relieved again by the candles on the high altar. The great organ ceased its sound and the plaintive chant of the Priests arose—the effect of their harsh voices echoing between the lofty pillars was like a wail of despair. I stood transfixed and drank it all in while my soul went out in a prayer above the incense and the candles, above the sound of the voices beyond the rays of the sun to that God who loves to be called our Father.

I had a most interesting drive with friends on the evening of Good Friday. We started from the "Piazza della Signoria" under the shadow of the "Palazzo Vecchio," and drove out through the quaint little streets with the "Arno" through "Porta Romana," and so slowly on, winding up to the top of the hill of "Michael Angelo," where his bronze statue of "David" stands overlooking the city.

It was a calm, still, almost summer evening. The stars were all sparkling as they can only in the clear blue of the Italian sky. Below us in silence lay Florence. Between us and the city flowed the Arno, lined on both sides by long rows of gas lamps. In the distance the great dome of the Cathedral and Grotto tower rose up against the deep blue of the starry sky. Behind us in the gloom we could just trace the outline of the colossal figure of "David," and still further back clear cut against the horizon stood the church of San Miniato. As we stood there the eastern sky began to brighten and soon the great full moon arose and bathed all the scene with its silvery light. The whole drive was full of beauty.

On the Saturday before Easter there is an ancient ceremony in Florence performed every year since the crusades called "Lo Scoppio Del Carro." It is regarded by the peasants as a religious rite, and by the success of the whole thing they judge of the prospects of the coming crops.

It was a bright sunny morning and at 11:30 I found myself in the midst of a vast crowd standing in the Piazza before the cathedral. Around me were hundreds of peasants in the variegated colors which an Italian loves so dearly. Patient blue eyed "Contadini" mothers with their little blue eyed daughters in their arms, excited black eyed fathers wearing the long fur trimmed coats of the peasant, holding by the hand their little boys with their long curling hair and queer old dirty skin caps, the colors of which would make dead artists green with jealousy.

"Ah, Reginald, Reginald, why are you so rash, wearing that heavy seal skin cap on a night so hot as this and having nothing but thin slippers to protect your feet from the snow and ice of the sidewalks?"—Chicago Record.

An Obliging Young Man.

The young man's father had decided that he had led a life of idleness long enough, so he had him put to work in his store. Shortly afterward, he asked of the manager of the business:

"How is Charley doing?"

"First rate."

"Is he industrious? Does he keep house?"

"Well, you see; he's right considerate about that. Some young men in his position would jump in and try to do things. But he seems just as anxious as can be to keep out of the way."—Washington Post.

The Mourner.

"I never realized until today," said a young woman to me, "how true is that quotation, 'Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.'"

"What's the matter now?" I asked rather unapologetically.

"Oh, nothing more than usual, but paper won't let Harry come to see me any more, and all the girls' fathers are the same." Then she sighed deeply and added dolefully, "We girls are the thorns who mourn."—Washington Post.

Following Directions.

Mr. Grogan—Ol' took the powder, doctor, but it is sicker Ol' am than Ol' was before Ol' helped you follow the directions—as much as could be heaped on a cent piece every three hours?

Mr. Grogan—Ol' followed this as much as Ol' could, doctor. Ol' had no time as Ol' had, doctor. Ol' had no time as Ol' had, a half—Indianapolis Journal.

Innocent mirth of every description inspires a sympathetic pleasure and works a good that is contagious. Wit and humor are among the great refreshments of life and are gifts in trust to those who possess them for the cheer and exhilaration of mankind.

Love is a bird of passage that women await with curiosity in youth, retain with pleasure in maturity and always escape with regret when old age creeps in front of you.

When you are on the street and wish to carry an umbrella under your arm, carry it with the handle behind you so that the lance end will point downward in front of you.

Europe's Flowers.

Of the 4,200 kinds of flowers growing in Europe only 420 are odoriferous. Less than one-fifth of the white kinds—which number 1,194—are fragrant, 77 of the 951 yellow kinds, 84 of the 625 red kinds, 31 of the 954 blue kinds, 13 of the 809 violet blue kinds and 28 of the 240 kinds with combined colors.—Philadelphia Press.

He Was Sincere.

Friend—What did he say to you when he proposed to you?

Miss Rox—He said life without me meant nothing.

Friend—He was sincere in that.

That's just what his possessions amount to—Boston Commercial.

Not That Kind.

Lady—Have you any celery?

Green Huckster—Not much, am'n only \$3 a week.—Detroit Free Press.

## FIN DE SIECLE.

On this last night of the century, of a man and a maiden who walked into love in the end of the century fashion.

Now, perhaps you suppose that he read in her eyes

The sweet message that made him grow bold.

Not at all! 'Twas expressed in the bend of her back.

And disclosed the set of her shoulder.

They talked about art, and religion, and cults.

That's what Mr. Kipling thought qualified praise.

And expressed their approval of Barrie.

And when, on occasion, they talked of their love.

They talked about their occupations.

They were poor very nearly, because

They wanted to make observations.

But the end! Were they wed in the usual way?

Did fate their lives cruelly sever?

Oh, this is the end of the century tale.

And has no sort of ending whatever?

—Hilda Johnson, in Vogue.

Saved by a Pony.

Elephants are extremely afraid of horses, writes Major John Butler in "Travels in Assam."

To that face he owed the deliverance of his wife and child from a terrible death.

With him, tramping the jungle over an exceedingly rough road through forest and grass jungle alternately, the way had to be cut as they advanced. I was

in the lead on a large elephant in my howdah, with a good battery of guns

when about midday I heard behind me a general cry of alarm and hastily rode to the scene of danger. It seems that

when I had passed, with the coolies

who cut down the jungle, a huge

Makna elephant rushed from the jungle in a terrible rage and pursued the little

baggage elephant which was just

being prepared and fed for its life.

It stopped short, turned aside and fled back to the jungle as if pursued by an evil spirit. The men were filled with astonishment. Most of them had fled to the protection of sheltered trees, leaving my wife and child alone.—Youth's Companion.

Extract from a Chicago Novel.

Spring had come, and as Gladys went to the door a gust of summer breeze, laden with sleet and snowflakes, blew in. She shuddered a little as she saw the November rain pouring on the head up snowbanks, above which June suns were blooming.

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